VEDAS AND US



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Let Us Study the Vedas

Stutā mayā varadā vedamātā pracodayantām pāvamānim dvijānām
āyuḥ prāṇam prajām paśūm kīrtim draviṇam brahmavarcasam
mahyam dattvā vrajata brahmalokam (Atharvaveda 19.71.1)

I glorify (study) the Vedas, which are as benevolent and kind as the mother could be. The Mother-Veda fulfills all our (noble) desires. She inspires us to be on the righteous path. She purifies all those who take the second birth through the true education, i.e. by knowing who they really are – up to their innermost core. She fulfills all our needs and desires by providing us with:

1. Long Life Span
2. Vitality and Vigor of the Life
3. Wonderful Obedient Children
4. Domesticated Animals with Ample Milk and Power
5. Name and Fame in the World
6. Wealth and Prosperity, and
7. True Spiritual Knowledge about both Individual Spirit and the Infinite Spirit.

On death, the Mother-Veda guides us towards *Brahmaloka* in closest proximity of that Infinite Spirit who is all-bliss so that we can rejoice forever.

Therefore, every human being without any exception and without any discrimination based on age, gender, caste, creed, culture, religion, language, national origin, etc. should come to the lap of the Mother-Veda (that is, make a serious attempt to study what the Vedas tell us). This will lead to immense improvement in the present life (*abhudaya*) and thereafter too (*niśreyas*).

PREFACE

The present booklet was first brought out in July 2004 by Arya Samaj, Visvesvarapuram, Banagalore under the title of "Vedas for the People." It gives me pleasure to bring out this second revised edition with some additional matter under the new title of "Vedas and Us." I hope that the readers willl get a glimpse of the beauty of the Vedic teachings. For further study, they may then refer to the existing body of the detailed literature, including that of Maharsi Dayananda Sarasvati that exists translated into the English language as well.

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1. **Mr. Mahesh (Mike) Damani, Calgary, Canada**

Mr. Damani is the eldest son of the well known Arya Samaj figure in the Kolkata region, Shri Chand-Ratan Damani. Mr. Damani migrated to Vancouver, Canada and has proved his business acumen in a very short period of time by setting up a wholesale air ticket agency (Flight Express) of reputed airlines such as Air Canada. Like his father, he has been very keen to work towards propagation of the Vedic wisdom even though the demands of his business are very heavy. As a successful entrepreneur, he never forgets to pay back to the society. In 2003, when the author brought a well-researched book on vegetarianism then he came forward to sponsor a substantial number of its copies for free distribution by himself in Canada and by his parents in India.

2. **Mrs. and Mr. Vishwanath Bhandari, Birmingham, UK**

Both Mrs. and Mr. Bhandari are originally from Lucknow in the state of Uttar Pradesh in India. They have been domiciled in the UK for over fifty years now. They are leading retired life after an active and fruitful working part of the life. Both have been regular devotees in the Arya Samaj West Midlands since 1990. Mr. Bhandari has served the Arya Samaj in many capacities. As the Vice President, Mr. Bhandari was deeply involved in the activities of the Arya Samaj, particularly in the services it provides to the community in West Midlands Day Care Centre.

During the visit the present author made in August 2005 at the invitation of the Arya Samaj West Midlands, Mrs. and Mr. Bhandari took great interest in his radio talks. They offered to help his cause of propagating the universal Vedic values among one and all. When they learned that he will be soon working towards the second edition of the present booklet then they offered to help bring it out.

VEDAS AND US

The very word Veda means knowledge, derived from the root *vid*. Indeed, the Vedas are the fountainhead of the knowledge. Entire humanity recognizes that *Ṛgveda* is the oldest book in the library of the mankind. However, the truth is that the four Vedas (Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda and Atharvaveda) were revealed to four Ṛṣis at the dawn of the mankind on the earth.

God's Revelation of Vedas: Bādarāyaṇa, the author of Brahmasūtra (also called Vedānta-*Darśana*) declares at the outset that God exists because Vedas exist – *śāstrayonitvāt*. It must be so because the most benevolent God must reveal the knowledge to the mankind once He creates the creation and His masterpiece that the man is. Patañjali, the author of Yoga-*Darśana* declares that God is the original teacher for the mankind – *sa pūrveṣāmapi guruḥ kālenānavacchedāt*. The common sense says that God's revelation must appear at the onset of the creation so that everybody, the first generation included, benefits from the same. Any book that appears into the world after human beings have inhabited the earth for a length of time can not claim to be God's revelation. Also, God's revelation of knowledge includes the knowledge of the language. So, any book that claims to be God's revelation must appear before the knowledge of the particular language developed. That means that a book in Arabic can not be God's revelation if the Arabic language had developed before the particular book appeared. Similarly, a book appearing in Latin or Hebrew can not be God's revelation if these languages had developed at the time of appearance of that book. On the same token, Gītā can not be called as God's revelation because the language of Sanskrit was very much in its developed form when Gītā came into existence. Therefore, only Vedas can be God's

revelations because they only gave rise to the language that is called Sanskrit.

Commensurate to the unique features of the Vedas, man's greatest effort was focussed on preserving them since his advent on the earth. He devised several methods to recite it so as to preserve the same without any infinitesimal change even in a letter and its pronunciation. We Indians should take extreme pride that our forefathers took utmost care to such an extent. Of course, they were guided in their zeal and effort by the belief that it is God given word which they must pass on to the future generations, come what may. There is no other book even remotely close to such a unique astounding feature that the Vedas are associated with.

Both the Creation and the Vedas Show Harmony: The very next line Bādarāyaṇa wrote after the above quoted line was – *tattu samanvayāt*. That is to say, Vedas must be God's revelations because all they contain tally well with the creation. For example, the earth is referred to as *bhūgola*, meaning the earth is round like a sphere as is indeed the case. This led the ancient people in India to know that the earth is round like a ball while, on the contrary, the people in West Asia and elsewhere thought it to be flat like a mat.

There is nothing in the Vedas that is contrary to what is seen in the nature. Over and beyond what we know today, the Vedas may contain many more revelations that we might not even be aware of today. Vedas contain knowledge about both matter and spirit. The knowledge about matter is in seed form leaving ample room for man to discover further and create his own body of literature. On the other hand, the knowledge pertaining to spirit is at its pinnacle that man will never be able to add anything to that body of knowledge.

The Vedas will always remain relevant like the sun is. Though man has created many sources of light to dispel the darkness,

he remains dependent upon the sun. The role of Vedas is similar to that of the sun albeit in the inner intellectual domain where man must exhibit greater perseverance to dispel the darkness of untrue knowledge, which leads to pains and agonies of much greater proportions. Let us hope that the humanity will benefit from the Vedas as much as it benefits from the sun, both having been created by the most benevolent and merciful God. As long as man followed the path shown by the Vedas in the ancient India, the life was at its brightest zenith. When India deviated from the path of Vedas about 6000 years ago, her downfall began. Since India was the lighthouse for the entire world, it is seen that the humanity too has been in miserable condition in the last few thousand years.

***Dharma* and Religion:** Indians can be proud of the word *dharma* that the languages of other countries do not quite have a word of this kind. The non-Indian languages have the word corresponding to religion and it is interesting to see that Indian languages do not quite have a word for religion. In loose sense, both the words *dharma* and religion are interchangeably used in the present times though. But their meanings are very different. Like science, *dharma* is rational and scientific. So, it is acceptable to the entire humanity like science is. It even goes beyond science because it pertains to spirit too while science restricts itself to matter alone. In other words, *dharma* can be described as spiritual science, or scientific religion. Indeed, *dharma* is the way of life entire humanity can follow. What code of conduct we can follow and would like others to follow would be included in *dharma*. *Dharma* will naturally include truthfulness, not hurting others, not to steal others' property, not to view people of opposite gender with lust, and not to collect things beyond legitimate requirement (*satya*, *ahiṁsā*, *asteya*, *brahmacarya* and *aparigraha*) – Patañjali included these five characteristics in his classic Yoga-*Darśana* as the five members of *yama*. Everybody in the world would

expect others to maintain these codes of conduct and so should be followed by everybody.

The aforesaid means that the humanity may have many religions but it will have one and only one *dharma* – the *Mānava-Dharma* (the dharma of the mankind), the *Sanātana Dharma* (the dharma that is eternal; the one that existed in the most ancient times and will continue to exist in present and future), or humanism – the Universal *Dharma*. *Mānava-Dharma* is best explained in the Vedas that originated from the most benevolent God who only brought the human beings on this planet by His extraordinary creative energy. The ancient literature supports this view: *vedo-akhilo dharma-mūlam* (Vedas are the origin of all that is *dharma*), *dharmajijñāsamānānām pramāṇam paramam śrutiḥ* (Those who desire to know *dharma,* for them the ultimate authority is Vedas), *saṁ śrutena gamemahi mā vi rādhiṣi* (Follow the path of the Vedas and not otherwise). While religions divide us, the *Mānava-Dharma* can unite the entire humanity into one fabric giving rise to universal love, brotherhood and peace. The unifying powers of God and Vedas can not be overemphasized.

Vedas for All: God's creation is for one and all. The sun and the moon, the water and the air, the plants and the trees, the rivers and the mountains, and everything else in this wonderful world are for one and all living species. God creates things for the benefit of everyone. While all species come into the world with natural knowledge in an instinctive form, man has to undergo great effort and industry to obtain knowledge through his powerful faculty of intellect. While all species possess instinct, only man possesses intellect – the *buddhi*. Therefore, members of other living species do not require Vedas; they are for the human beings only. Being God's revelation, it is for every human being. Yajurveda declares *yathemām vācam kalyanīm vadānim janebhyaḥ*. That is, the Vedas are for every human being. There can be absolutely no discrimination based

on caste, color, creed, culture, language, national origin, etc. in so far as the study of the Vedas is concerned. Anybody who has the human vocal chord (that is, every human being) has the natural right to recite the Vedas.

Philosophy of Creation: This small booklet primarily contains the fundamental message to help the people lost in the dark woods to find their way to the Supreme Lord who is the father and mother of every human being. Every child naturally yearns to be with his mother and father. Otherwise, he is doomed to be an orphaned child. But there are many people who don't even recognize that there is a common father and mother of all of us whom we may call by God, *Brahman*, *Īśvara*, Allah, or any such names. Vedas themselves include many names for Him besides the sweetest syllable OM, and in so doing, they declare *ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti* – He is verily one and one only with OM as His very own name and the noblest souls call Him with different names derived from His attributes, activities, functions, etc. Let us now briefly discuss the philosophy of creation so as to clarify about the existence of God and ourselves.

Consider a simple man-made object such as a wooden table. We ask ourselves what are the causes responsible for bringing it into existence. Obviously, without wood the wooden table couldn't come into being. But we know that a log of wood does not become a table by itself no matter how long we wait. A carpenter must act upon it. Let us see some characteristics of these two causes, namely wood and the carpenter. While wood goes through a transformation, the carpenter causes the transformation without himself going through any kind of transformation. That is to say, while table has been made out of wood, it has been made by the carpenter. At the end of the process the wooden log does not exist but the carpenter continues to exist. For these reasons, the wood and the carpenter

are called as the **material cause** and the **efficient cause**, respectively.

But this is not the end of the story behind the simple object that a wooden table is. One could ask why would the carpenter decide to make a table at the first place. Obviously, he must be sure that someone will use it. If nobody were interested in a table then no carpenter would make it. Thus, there has to be an end-user who will enjoy the table. The end-user (called the **first cause** or the **hidden cause**) may not be directly causing the transformation of the wood into the table yet he is a cause in the sense that if he weren't there then the carpenter wouldn't take the trouble of making a table. In conclusion, we have seen that an object must have three causes: 1) the material cause, 2) the efficient cause, and 3) the first cause. In the present case of a wooden table, the three causes were a log of wood, a carpenter, and an end-user. It should be pointed out here that the material cause (wood) in the present case, is an inert substance void of life while the other two causes are conscious beings.

Having established the above framework, Vedic philosophers state that the causes of the creation are: 1) the matter in its most primordial form is the material cause, called *prakṛti*, 2) God, the all-knowing, all-pervading entity is the efficient cause, and 3) the tiny individual conscious souls who are infinite in number are the first cause(s). There is one to one correspondence: The table is made out of wood by a carpenter for an end-user. The creation is made out of matter by God for the souls. As such wood was an inert substance that was acted upon by a conscious being. Similarly, matter is an inert substance void of consciousness that is acted upon by God. As we saw that the carpenter and the end-user human being were conscious beings; so is true with God and the individual souls having intrinsic consciousness. Among many attributes that these three primary entities possess, the commonest three are

described by the following hierarchy: Matter (*prakṛti*) has eternal existence, called *sat*. The individual infinitesimal soul (*jīvātmā*) is eternally conscious too, in addition to being eternally existent, i.e. *sat* and *cit*. God (*Īsvara*) is in eternal bliss too over and above being ever existent and conscious, i.e. *sat cit* and *ānanda* – this gives rise to the compound word *saccidānanda*, commonly referring to God in the Indian culture.

The finality of all the human attempts is to be with Him who is the infinite reservoir of bliss. There is no other way to enjoy the life – *nānyaḥ panthāḥ vidyate ayanāya* (Yajurveda). This is what makes it important that one must gain true spiritual knowledge about the individual soul and God, their true characteristics and attributes, the methodology the soul could adopt to enjoy proximity to God in the present life and thereafter, and other related issues. Only Vedas deal with these issues in a rational, rigorous and convincing manner.

The present spiritual literature available in the world can be broadly classified into two groups. In the first group exist the religious texts claiming to spell out the code of conduct but they fail to convince us on philosophical grounds. Then there is the second group of books that seem to develop a wonderful philosophy but they lack in inspiring moral code of conduct. Only Vedas are the books in the world that they can authoritatively guide us both in deep morality and high philosophy; they can satisfy both our hearts and heads simultaneously.

The well-known Ṛgvedic hymn describes the creation through an interesting replica of a tree inhabited by two birds:

Dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariṣasvajāte

i.e., There is a tree (*vṛkṣa* meaning *prakṛti*, i.e. matter) inhabited by two birds (two conscious beings) – one of the two eats the fruits on the tree (the soul is the end user of the creation) and the other one (God doesn't eat the fruits) is merely

watching the first one. Suffice it to say here that there are three primary entities, which are eternal (*nitya*): matter, soul and God. The entire visible world is the manifest of matter (*prakrti*) while the soul and God are un-manifest.

Vedas and God: Maharsi Dayānanda Sarasvatī (1824-'83), probably the most brilliant Vedic scholars of the modern times, declared that the Vedas deal with all true knowledge from *paramānu* to *paramesvara*, i.e. from the smallest particle to the Infinite God.

God is one and only one: *mahittvaika idrājā jagato babhūva* (Yajurveda) – He is one and is the only ruler of the world because of his infinite attributes.

God is our Father and Mother: *tvam hi naḥ pitā vaso tvam mātā* (Rgveda) – You are our Father and Mother.

God is our Friend: *sa no bandhurjanitā sa vidhātā* (Yajurveda) – He is our Friend.

According to the Vedas, we all are His sons and daughters. We all are capable of the most direct relationship with Him without any intermediary. As we know, a child has the closest direct link to her mother and father. The child will not accept anybody between her and her father and mother. So is our relationship with God. Indeed, it is closer than any relationship that we know in the world. Therefore, we should be bold enough in rejecting anybody who intends to position himself between us and God. Nobody can claim to be His only child or His messenger. Every human being is capable of being in union with God provided he/she can prove him-/her-self to be His worthy child by way of noble acts in the world. Knowing Him is the only way; there is no other way. Yajurveda says, *nānyah panthāh vidyate ayanāya*.

We, the Human Beings: Vedas declare that we are not the body alone. We are a tiny spirit void of matter, called soul. The soul

utilizes the huge body through a link that is the mind. Thus, we are a bundle of body, mind and soul. Our true identity is the soul. Animals, birds and other living beings are bundle of body, mind and soul too. However, man differs from them because he can lead an un-chartered life while other species live more or less in a programmed manner. The objectives of the human life in the world may be summarized by the trilogy of *jñāna*, *karma* and *upāsanā* – knowledge, work and worship. For the soul to be able to engage in *jñāna*, *karma* and *upāsanā*, the body and mind are provided with as the excellent instruments. Union of the soul and the body is our birth and separation thereof is death.

Worshipping God: The soul is not made of matter, and therefore, it never undergoes any change nor does it die. It's eternal. The soul has been transmigrating from one life to another and will continue to do so. Only the human life provides the unique golden opportunity to come out of this cycle of birth and death through self-realization and God-realization. For the soul to realize itself it must be able to de-link itself from the mind through meditation. When the soul is de-linked from the mind then it can truly know itself, called self-realization. Subsequently, with the grace of God, that soul may be able to realize God. The related knowledge and techniques are described in Patañjali's Yoga-*Sūtra* based on the verses of the Vedas. Patañjali defines Yoga as, *Yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ.* That is, Yoga is to subdue (*nirodhaḥ*) all the functions (*vṛtti*) of the mind (*citta*). Only when all the functions of the mind are subdued (or, so to say, the mind is thoroughly inactive, being even void of any thought process) then the soul can de-link itself from the mind. Then only one can experience the self-realization *(ātma-sākṣātkāra)* – the next step could be that the tiny soul can experience the proximity of God who pervades through the soul as well. In other words, once a soul is de-linked from the mind, it is now alone by itself. With His grace

then the particular soul may be linked to God. This and this alone is the method to worship God, and to Him alone is worship due and to nobody else. This requires purity of mind through an upright moral code of conduct and continuous practice to control the functions of the mind.

Definitely, the union of soul and God can take place within us where the soul resides and where He too exists by virtue of His being omnipresent and all-pervading. According to the Vedas, there is no sense in worshipping God in a temple, mosque, church, or any other man-made structure. If man must look for a conducive location then it can be such locations where the mother nature showers Her pristine beauty in an unpolluted form. Yajurveda says,

Upahvare girīṇāṁ saṅgame ca nadīnām. Dhiyā vipro ajayāta.

i.e., In the valleys of the mountains and near the confluence of the rivers, our intellect gets purified (for realization of self and God).

A soul with the ability to experience self-realization and God-realization, by virtue of higher order karma may be granted *mukti* upon its death, i.e. the soul may come out of the cycle of birth and death.

God is Kind and Just: God is infinitely kind, benevolent and merciful that He has given us everything that we could ask for our progress in the human life. There is absolute perfection in His creation. He is perfectly just as well, as is reflected in diversity seen among the human beings. For example, one baby child is born to poor parents where even mother's milk may not be sufficient and another child is born to rich parents. One child is born with normal physique while another child is born with body defects. The diversity among newly born children demonstrates His justice mechanism applied to different souls depending on their *karma* in the previous lives. To the layman,

the attributes of kindness and just may sound opposite. But, in reality, they are the two sides of the same coin. If God was not just then it would amount to being unkind. Don't we see in the world that if the wicked is pardoned and a noble person is punished then such unjust acts bring harm to the society – isn't it unkindness? So, one who is kind must be just too. This brings us to discuss His justice mechanism, called the Law of *Karma*.

Law of Karma, One Reaps what One Sows: The layman knows that he would be rewarded for his karma in absolute and correct measure, sooner or later. Man has made many things in the image of the God-made things such as airplanes in the image of the birds, ships and submarines in the image of the fishes, the lamps in the image of the sun, etc. Similarly, the law of land that prevails in the nations is in the image of the Law of Karma. As we know, the man-made things are imperfect while God-made things are absolutely perfect. So is true in the present context. While the law of land in the nations are imperfect and require periodical review and revision, His Law of Karma is eternal and perfect. While the laws of the lands may not be enforced perfectly, the Law of Karma is.

Yajurveda implores us to remember three things always: 1) *Om*, the God, 2) the past karma, and 3) the unlimited human potentials.

Om krato smara krataṁ smara klibe smara

Remember that the past karma will be definitely rewarded, an eye for an eye, an apple for an apple, by the omniscient God, called *Om* who witnesses everything we do. And, don't complaint – as a human being you have been given the best set of instruments in the forms of the body and mind for you to perform the loftiest quality of karma. The Vedas do not speak about astrology, palmistry, horoscopes, etc. They encourage us to believe in karma and in our great potentials.

No Room for Forgiveness: It is obvious that the past karma will not be forgiven. If it were to be forgiven then His world will become an unruly unjust place. Thank God that it is not so. Every karma of ours is rewarded whether it is of positive nature or negative nature, *pāpa* or *puṇya*, virtuous or vicious, loftier or sinful, whatever it is. His justice mechanism is perfect like all His other attributes are. He is all-in-one – the witness, the judge – the omniscient infinite spirit. Thus, there is no room for any human being to claim that he/she can get his/her special petitions sanctioned. Nobody could ever and can ever get our sinful acts condoned. If anybody claims so then it is a BIG LIE or that person speaks out of childish immaturity.

Nobody Died for Someone Else's Sins: The absolute justice mechanism means that one who has committed the sinful acts will be punished. To punish someone else for another person's crime is unimaginable even by ordinary human standards. So how could such things happen in God's way of administering the justice? If a teacher awards high marks to one who wrote wrong answers and low marks to another who wrote correct answers in an examination then the layman will be quick to point out that such an arbitrary way of awarding marks amounts to injustice to both the students. If this is so in the day-to-day human world then how could such things happen in God's way of working that He would punish somebody else for another person's sinful acts? Furthermore, how could someone claim that another human being was punished some centuries ago for our present day sinful acts? All this goes against rational thinking even by ordinary human standards. Vedas are very clear on this aspect that every human being must be watchful of his acts. Of course, the purpose of the Law of Karma is to encourage us to be on the righteous path and desist from the sinful acts. Indeed, His Law of Karma and associated justice mechanism is an infinitely benevolent mechanism for our own good so that we may become progressively a better person.

Purpose of Prayer: If God doesn't forgive us then why should we waste our time and energy in prayers? This sounds like a valid question but it is asked by one who doesn't know the true meaning of prayers. Prayer, meaning *prārthanā*, is to beg for the knowledge and strength to do positive karma for overall good of the community. There is no prayer if someone asks God for selfish ends. Can we pray God and ask Him to make bread for us? Can we ask Him to sweep our houses? Such prayers are waste of time. The purpose of prayer is to ask for insights to see what is not easily visible to the mind. The purpose of prayer is to get strength to do some grand *karma* for others' benefit. Indeed, even such prayers are not granted merely by utterances of the words. They must be coupled with the related efforts and practices. True purpose of the prayers is to bring humility in ones mind and to derive encouragement from Him to perform positive higher order karma for the benefit of the others. Some Vedic prayers follow. It is remarkable that they are in plural form whenever the devotee asks for something except the last one that is in singular when he is taking a vow to lead the truthful life. Of course, the vow must be taken on behalf of the self alone.

Some Vedic Prayers: *Dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt* (Ṛgveda, Yajurveda and Sāmaveda) – May our intellects follow your Infinite Lustre and Brightness, called *Bhargaḥ*.

Vayam syāma patayoḥ rayīṇām (Yajurveda) – May we own great wealth.

Agne naya supathā rāye (Yajurveda) – May we follow the path of the learned souls.

Asmākam vīrā uttare bhavantu – May our brave heroes emerge victorious.

Idam aham anṛtāt satyam upaimi – I vow to leave the path of untruth to follow the path of truth.

Vedas are Scientific, Rational and All-Encompassing: Vedas are and must be scientific. They can not and do not contain anything that goes against what is seen in the creation. It must indeed be so because the creation and the Vedas are from the same source. This has been briefly discussed in the context of the aphorism *tattu samanvayāt* from Brahmasūtra. They must contain knowledge of all the disciplines that man may ever get interested in, such as humanities and economics, political and social sciences, earth sciences and astronomy, chemistry and biology, physics and mathematics, technology and engineering sciences, etc. and the spiritual sciences about the individual soul and the infinite soul called God. Needless to say, there is absolutely nothing in the Vedas that can go against the rules of the nature.

For example, the earth sciences are covered under the word *bhūgola* – the very word meaning that the earth is round. Even the layman in India since time immemorial knew that the earth is round like a spherical ball and it revolves around the sun. The Vedas clearly state that the earth revolves around the sun completing one orbit in one year. ... *kṣāḥ suṣṇam pradakṣiṇi* ... (Ṛg 10.22.14) This has given rise to the classical Indian calendar called *pañcāṅga* that is most scientific. It relates to both lunar and solar events. Its months are based on the lunar events of new moon and full moon, while the year is well synchronized with the earth's complete revolution around the sun. Other prevailing calendars either tally with the solar event of one year or with the lunar events of full moon and new moon. The former calendars, such as the Christian calendar, do not relate to the lunar events of full moon and new moon. On the other hand, the latter ones, such as the Islamic calendar, lack synchronization with the earth's complete revolution around the sun in a year. Furthermore, the latter ones find a particular month falling in different seasons. For example, we see that the Islamic month of Ramzan falls into different seasons over

a period of a few decades. The present European calendar is rather ad hoc that it contained 10 months only until a couple of centuries ago when under the influence of Indian astronomy it had to divide the year into 12 months albeit with arbitrary number of days contained therein. Note the names of the months September onwards. This month is now the ninth month in the year. But when the Europeans had 10 months in a year (January and February were added later!) then September was the seventh month – Septa from the Sanskrit word Sapta. Likewise, October was the eighth month – Octa from the Sanskrit word Aṣṭa. November was the ninth month – Nove from the Sanskrit word Nava. And, December was the tenth month – Dec from the Sanskrit word Daśa. Not only that they borrowed the number system from us, they corrected their calendar by making 12 months in a year, which used to have 10 months only. Ṛgveda (1.164.48) states that the earth revolves around the sun in 12 months ... *dvādaśa pradhayaścakramekam* ...

The gravitational force is also well covered in the Vedas. The sun attracts the earth and other planets towards itself giving rise to the solar system. This ensures that the earth remains on its prescribed path due to the attractive force of the sun ... *savitā yantraiḥ pṛthivimaramṇā* ... (Ṛg 10.149.1). All the events such as different six seasons (... *vasantāya* ... *grīṣmāya* ..*varṣābhyām* ... *śarade* .. *hemantāya* ... *śiśirāya* .. Yv 24.20), the rains due to the clouds (...*vātāya dhūmāya abhrāya* ... Yv 22.26), eclipses (when moon covers the sun then the solar eclipse occurs and it becomes dark everywhere ... *yattvā sūrya svarbhānustamasā* ... Ṛg 5.40.5), etc. are scientifically covered in the Vedas. Moreover, the verses in the Vedas gave rise to a rich development of mathematics and positive sciences in the classical India. So much so that India was not only spiritually rich, it was the richest nation on the earth until about three hundred years ago when people throughout the world yearned

to come here for its wealth and knowledge, including Columbus who lost direction and reached Americas though his destination was India.

We will briefly mention other positive sciences in the Vedas:

a) The moon reflects the sun's light and it does not emit its own light ... *atrāha goramanvata* ... *itthā candramaso gṛhe* ... (Ṛg 1.84.15)

b) Airplanes ... *vimāna eṣa divo madhya āsta* ... Yv 17.59

c) There is one and only one creator – that one and only Deva, who sees everywhere, whose face is everywhere, whose hands reach everywhere, whose feet walk everywhere, He mobilizes the matter first, then through the atomic particles, He creates the sun and the earth and so on ... *viśvataścakṣuruta viśvatomukha viśvatobāhuruta viśvataspāt* ...*sam bahubhyām dhamati* ... Ṛg 10.81.3

d) Political system consisting of law and order – lawmaker (*brahma*) and law-enforcing (*kṣatra*) agencies....*yatra brahma ca kṣatrañca samyañcau* ..Yv 20.25 and ... *idam me brahma ca kṣatram ca cobhe* ...Yv 32.16.

e) Vital forces keep us alive, including the working of our senses ...*prāṇāya apānāya vyānāya cakṣuṣe śrotrāya vāce svāhā manase svāhā* Yv 22.23

f) Ten directions of east, south, west, north and four in-between directions such as south-east, etc. and then the zenith and the one below ... *prācyai arvācyai dakṣiṇāyai praticyai udīcyai ūrdhvāyai* ... Yv 22.24

g) Different sources of water ...*adbhyaḥ vārbhyaḥ ūdakāya tiṣṭhantībhyaḥ srvantībhyaḥ syandmānābhyaḥ kūpyābhyaḥ sūdyābhyaḥ dhāryābhyaḥ arṇavāya samudrāya sarirāya*... Yv 22.25

h) Heavenly bodies and time durations ... *nakṣatrebhyaḥ nakṣatriyebhyaḥ ahoratrebhyaḥ ardhamāsebhyaḥ ṛtubhyaḥ arttavebhyaḥ saṁvatsarāya dyāvāpṛthivībhyām candrāya sūryāya raśmibhyaḥ vasubhyaḥ rudrebhyaḥ ādityebhyaḥ marudbhyaḥ* ... Yv 22.28.

i) Different living species (zoology) inhabiting the ocean, sky, clean water, trees, etc., including the need to maintain zoos and museums for people to get to know all kinds of species ... *samudrāya śiśumārānālabhate parjanyāya maṇḍukānadbhyo matsyān* ... Yv 24.21 to 23

j) Different food grains through agriculture, such as paddy, barley, *urad*, *moong*, *canā*, wheat, etc. ...*vrīhayaścame yavāśca me māṣāśca me tilāśca me mudgāśca me* .... *godhūmāśca me masūrāśca me yajñena kalpantām* Yv 18.12.

k) Soil sciences, i.e. how to utilize different kinds of soil ... *aśmā ca me mṛttikā ca me girayaśca me parvatāśca me sikatāśca me* ... *trapuca me yajñena kalpantām* Yv 18.13.

l) Numbers, the most notable contribution from India to the world in mathematical sciences ... *eka (1) daśa (10) śatam (100) sahasra (1000) āyuta niyuta prayuta arbuda ryarbuda samudraśca madhyam anta pararddha* Yv 17.2.

m) Odd numbers 1 3 5 7 9 11 13 1 5 17 19 21 23 25 27 29 31 33 (Yv 18.24)

n) Series of numbers divisible by four 4 8 12 16 20 24 28 32 36 40 44 48 (Yv 18.25)

Now we will discuss how Vedas teach us to lead a dignified and useful individual's life. Vedas beautifully balance the

individuality and collectivity (*vyaṣṭi* and *samaṣṭi*) – one is for the other. The ultimate objective is that we must enjoy the life while in the world and even beyond it.

Vedas and An Individual's Life: The *varnāśrama vyavasthā* is the cornerstone of the human development both as an individual and as a social network. At the individual level, the human life has been divided into four phases called *āśrama* – *brahmacarya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *saṁnyāsa*, i.e. the student life, married life as a householder, retired life as an ascetic, and finally that of a monk. It must be contrary to many peoples' belief that the topic that has been discussed in the greatest number of Vedic hymns is that of the householder's life. This phase has been treated as the very center of the social fabric. Naturally and obviously so, the housewife occupies the central position in the household, and therefore, the woman's position has been at the highest pedestal. The four divisions of the human life lead to a guided destiny in a perfect balance where one learns to develop himself/herself in *brahmacarya* with the purpose to repay back to his/her parents in *gṛhastha*. Later on the person is expected to work for the community in *vānaprastha* and then for the entired humanity while being in *saṁnyāsa*. The married life is not to satisfy lust but to procreate children of increasingly better characteristics. The singular contribution of the Vedic culture is to view sexual intercourse as the means to *garbhāṁdhāna* – it is not an act for gratification alone but is the most responsible act to bring a new child into the world. Certainly so, it is not a sinful act.

Vedas and the Society: Likewise, the society is viewed with its four integral segments. This is based on a deep study of the causes of pains and sufferings that a society goes through. The sufferings are broadly due to: 1) ignorance, i.e. lack of the true knowledge or due to the wrong knowledge, 2) injustice, and 3) scarcity of commodities. These three factors are expressed by

the three words: *ajñāna*, *anyāya* and *abhāva*. Thus, every educated person is encouraged to pick up a profession at the successful end of his/her studies that attempts to help eliminate one of the three aforesaid societal enemies. Those who become teachers or researchers to eradicate *ajñāna* were called *brāhmaṇa*. Those who were against injustice became to be known as *kṣatriya* and worked in police and armed forces. Those who went for farming and manufacturing of commodities and their distribution by way of trade and commerce were known as *vaiśya*. Others who could not and did not educate themselves even with all available resources were encouraged to serve the people engaged in the above three segments, and they were called *śūdra*. This classification is based on the profession, which is based purely on merit and has nothing to do with birth. This *varṇavyavasthā* has nothing to do with the so-called caste. Vedas do not speak of caste. Human society can not be divided into caste by birth. By birth, all are equal.

The very word *varṇa* is derived from the root *vṛñ*, meaning to select. It was always the prerogative of an individual to select his/her profession with appropriate merits gathered. Indeed it is seen today and so was the case that an individual switched over the profession at his/her will. For example, a medical student joins the army (*kṣatriya*) after the studies. A few years later, he becomes a teacher in a medical college (*brāhmaṇa*). After some years of teaching profession, he decides to open a nursing home (*vaiśya*). When an individual is free to switch over his/her profession in a matter of few years during the course of the life then how can it be said that the professions can not change from one generation to another? The caste system has no basis in the Vedas and came into existence in the medieval period. Its current existence is due to two major factors: 1) Lack of education and open-mindedness among different sections of the people, and 2) Narrow motives that are gained by some interested people in foreign countries and those engaged in politics and other professions in the country.

Varṇavyavasthā is scientific and rational. There is no nation or society where people do not join the professions of teaching, research, police, armed forces, farming, manufacturing, trade, commerce, service, etc. Even the countries that pay lip service to the so-called classless society have people engaged in these professions. Such specialties are necessary because the human society differs from that of other species in the sense that we go through education and specialization.

Vedas and the Family: Human society has a very special institution called the family. Indians can be legitimately proud of the fact that we have taught the whole world the relationships that develop in a family structure, and of course, the origin of this is in the Vedas. For example, the word *Pitṛ/Pitā* in the Vedas became Peter in Latin, Vater in German and Father in English. The word *Mātr/Mātā* traversed the similar journey to become Mutter in German and Mother in English. So is true with the words *Bhrātr* and *Svasṛ* that became Bruder and Schwester in German and Brother and Sister in English. Can this contribution of India be overemphasized? Can one imagine what this world would be like if the concept of mother, father, brother and sister was not taught by India to the humanity. Not only the concept, we even gave them the corresponding words. Of course, the Vedas go many steps further when they say *yatra viśvam bhavtyekam nīḍam* (Yajurveda). That is, the world is like a bird's nest. Today's world can come out of the conflicts, wars and strife that it is torn into if it heeds the India's Vedic message of *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* – the entire world is one small family.

Needless to say, the Vedas can show light to the entire world today. We see that today's western world has the institution of family torn apart where the husband and wife live under constant mistrust and the children are constantly under the black clouds of fear and insecurity because the latter are often afraid of the possibility that their parents may divorce each

other. Things are no way better in other parts of the world where the women are subjugated to untold miseries. They have no equal rights. They are often treated as the objects of desire and pleasure.

Vedas and the Women: When the students attend convocation at the conclusion of their formal studies they are given the last formal *upadeśa* that says *mātṛdevobhava pitṛdevobhava*. The fact that the mother is remembered before the father is, speaks about the thrust of the Vedic literature. It is sad to see that the entire world took so long to grasp this emphasis of the Vedic literature on the superiority of women. The western world took many centuries to give even voting rights to the women. They almost believed as if man is born out of a superior force while the woman is born out of an insignificant rib of the man's body. At last, there is now some awakening that the world is talking about the equality among men and women. In this background we want to quote one Vedic hymn that declares the superiority of women – *nāri brahmā babhūvitha*. That is, the woman is the God personified – so grand is her stature in the Vedic literature! There is an entire *sūkta* in Ṛgveda devoted to the wedding ritual, which is the cornerstone of the householder's life. Therein the newly married woman while entering into her husband's home is addressed as **Empress** – the original word is *sāmrājñī*!

Vedas and Morality: Vedas are the first book giving us a moral code of conduct so that the people can live harmoniously and peacefully in their community. Patañjali, the author of Yoga-*Sūtra*, has concisely described them under the title of *yama* with its five elements: 1) *ahimsā* (not to hurt anyone by thought, word or deed), 2) *satya* (to be truthful, i.e. harmony in thought, word and deed), 3) *brahmacarya* (celibacy – a man must look a woman as he views his mother, sister or daughter except his wife when intending to procreate, and likewise a woman to

see a man as she views her father, brother and son except her husband when she wants to beget a child), 4) *asteya* (not to steal), and 5) *aparigraha* (not to hoard things beyond one's reasonable requirement). Included in the above are almost all the do's and don'ts that one could conceive of.

The backbone of morality is the love and regards for others in its true sense. Indians can proudly say to the world that it is only the Vedic literature, which speaks about well being of one and all – *sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ*. No modern religion can claim that it preaches well being of one and all. It is seen that the prevailing religions speak of sectarian well beaing, and even go to the extent harming others – sometimes even killing for no reason. In this background, the entire human society can proudly carry the torch of the Vedic knowledge and enter into a world of universal love, brotherhood and peace.

A Historical Perspective: Some five thousand years ago there was no religion on the earth. Prior to that it was *dharma* alone. Modern scientists believe that the earth is four billion years old and the first humans walked on it a few million years ago. The classical Indian view is that man has been on the earth for about two billion years – we have the *Sṛṣṭi Samvat* (Creation Era) that currently is 1,97,29,49,106 in the year 2006 AD. There may be difference in opinions about the true age of humanity on the earth, however there is no doubt that the Vedas guided the mankind for many thousands of years. While the Vedas unified the mankind under one absolute infinite God, the modern religions have divided the humans. Every prevailing religion has one or more dogmatic ideas and it can be stated with utmost certainty that none of them will ever be able to guide the entire humanity. That means that the religions will continue to cause conflicts and wars unless and until man takes a conscious and considered decision to follow the *dharma*. Before we discuss further, we must answer a pertinent question.

If the Vedas can guide the humanity towards a *Mānava Dharma* and it did so for several millennia then how did it happen that the mankind following the *dharma* deviated from the *dhārmik* path about 6000 years ago.

In answer to this, we want to submit that even the best constitution will fail if people do not follow it in letter and spirit. The failure of the people does not mean failure of the book. Human beings by nature tend to take life easy and begin to degrade with the passage of time, especially when the going is good. However, the strength of the Vedic path is that it guided the humanity for many thousands of years, even millions of years and that should be well recognized. Indeed, the last 6000 years has witnessed the downfall of India and consequent mushrooming of so many religions. The failure of the religions to give true spiritual knowledge to the mankind demonstrates in no uncertain terms that we must follow the path of the Vedas.

The Dark Age: Despite India's downfall in the last 6000 years, India was the torch bearer and lighthouse for the entire humanity until a few hundred years ago. Everyone from east and west wanted to come to India for its knowledge and wealth. Some even came with the intentions to loot its rich wealth. Being divided that it was in the recent past (by our standard of the length of the human history of several million years, the last two thousand years represent a very small time period indeed!) the aggressors could gradually succeed in penetrating into the country though some of our brave warriors made their full efforts to arrest the attacks. This has been the predominant history of the last few centuries. Finally, India did buckle under the constant aggressions and a major part of it came under Mughal rule a few hundred years ago. Even then it maintained its prime position in both knowledge and wealth by then world standards. But then the things went down in a quantum mode after the recent industrial revolution in Europe when European

countries had better armaments and ammunition – they had guns and we had swords. Not only India, rather the whole world was conquered and colonised by them. They had no better civilization but by sheer force of guns the British conquered and ruled the country for more than 200 years. The country went through massive degradation from cultural, political and economical sense during the British rule that has no parallel in our long history. The richest nation became a nation of the poor people by the time British left.

The nineteenth century India was under British rule. The darkness was rampant. Child marriage was the order of the day, giving rise to the children who were physically and mentally weaker. Small age widows were in large numbers and the religious priests would not permit their remarriage, causing tremendous agonies to the widows, including torture of sexual exploitation. The moral fabric was torn apart. The education as such was missing and more so for the girls. If the mothers are uneducated then how could the child's first teacher, namely the mother, could educate her child? This led to a vicious degradation in the society. Under the foreign rule the population generally lacked self-esteem and self-confidence. Cunning that the British were, they divided the country in the name of caste, language, religion and what not merely to perpetrate their occupation and exploitation of India's rich wealth.

Except for the military advantage that the Europeans had due to the outcome of the industrial revolution they didn't possess any grand human characteristics. Indeed Europe was in the midst of its own darkness when petty wars and one-upmanship among the European nations were the order of the day. Women were greatly oppressed. Only in the twentieth century they succumbed to the pressure and began to grant voting rights to their women. The Europeans believed that the women were void of an individual conscious soul and they were born out of an insignificant rib of the man's body. The religious heads

exploited every cross-section of the population. Finally, the European darkness led to two great wars in the twentieth century. Holocaust, gas chambers, mass graves and such events in Europe exhibited their hollow foundations. What they did elsewhere was much more frightening. They wiped out the entire population in the most barbaric manner from the geographical areas that are presently called North and South Americas, Australia and New Zealand. In other continents such as Asia and Africa where the inhabitants were in very large number they made colonies. They even treated human beings as slaves and traded them as a commodity. In so doing, the atrocities of murder and rape were any white man's birthright.

A New Awakening: When India and the rest of the world was covered with such dark clouds then a ray of light appeared most unexpectedly when a child named Mool-Shankar was born in Rajkot State in the present state of Gujarat in the year 1824. His father was Karsan Tiwari, a staunch *Śaivite* in the tradition of *Audicya Sāmavedi Brāhmaṇa*. The child learned entire Yajurveda in his tender age. When he was barely 14 he decided to keep the fast on *Mahāśivarātri* and remained awake through the night in the nearby *Śivālaya* where even grown up people had gone into sleep one after another. But he was true to the religious discipline. No sooner that most of the devotees had gone to sleep one mouse came near the *Śivaliṅga* and began to eat away the offerings made earlier to the idol. The young boy could not reconcile the great powers that *Śiva* was described to possess earlier in the evening and the fact that *Śiva* could not protect the offerings from a mouse. He soon woke up his father who was asleep and described his riddle. His father said that this is merely an idol and not the real *Śiva* who lived on a Himalayan mountain called Kailash, and after giving this explanation to his son, he went again into sleep. The child was not satisfied with the answer and thought that why should he go through penance to appease an idol that is not the real God.

He felt that he should do so only for the real *Śiva*. This incident turned out to be a major turning point in his life. Later, he lost his sister and uncle within a close span of time. The two deaths forced the young boy to ask the unanswered questions about the life and death. When he was 22 he abandoned the comforts of his home and left in search for "the true *Śiva* and the secret of immortality."

Next 15 years he (now Svāmī Dayānanda, after getting initiated into the *saṁnyāsa* tradition in due course) wandered throughout the country from high mountains of Himalayas to the deep forests along the river Narmadā in search for the right teacher. Finally, it was Virajānanda, a great grammarian in the Pāṇini school of Sanskrit grammar whose scholarship and ascetic life got him glued to Mathurā for the next 33 months. There he got the taste of the difference between the *arṣa* literature (meaning, authored by a *ṛṣi*, (a seer) and the modern literature. He began to fully understand that *ārṣa* literature brings one to the truth in a concise and efficient manner while the later authors have sometimes had narrow motives in writing books. Also, the scholarship of the later authors turns out to be superficial when compared with the brilliance of the sages and *ṛṣi*s in classical India. It takes much greater efforts and time for a student to understand the same truth from the modern *anārṣa* literature. Towards the end of his education, very unexpectedly, the blind old Guru refused to accept the cloves that Svāmī Dayānanda brought to him as *dakṣiṇā*. Instead, the Guru painted the gloomy picture of the country and convinced the young Dayananda to devote his life for the crusade of spreading the teachings in the true *arṣa* literature based on the Vedas. He, though ill-prepared for this great responsibility, promised to do so. This was an unexpected development so much so that he camped in nearby Āgrā for the almost next 30 months chalking out his next plan of action. Occasionally, he would leave early morning for the 50 km journey to Mathurā and discuss something with

the Guru and return the same night – the two-way journey made on foot.

Finally he blows the whistle in the 1867 *Kumbha* Gathering at Haridwār on the banks of Ganga. He unfurls the flag called *Pākhaṇḍa-Khaṇḍinī*, i.e. remover of all kinds of hypocrisy. He listed the eight major ills plaguing the society then, such as idol worship, *śrāddha* for the dead people, etc. by the priests whom he referred as popes in light of the Roman Catholic priests in medieval Roman Empire who exploited and cheated the innocent people. Next 16 years saw Dayānanda making whirlwind tours along the river Ganga from Haridwar to Kolkata and back, and then on to undivided Punjab, Mumbai State and Rajasthan. His activities included public lectures and discourses, writing the Magnum Opus "Light of Truth" and the commentaries on Ṛgveda (a major fraction) and Yajurveda. He wrote "*Saṁsakāravidhiḥ*" pertaining to the 16 sacraments with a view to giving rise to a better generation in the future. The scientific nature of the Vedas was brought out in his Introduction to the Commentaries on the Vedas – a voluminous book by itself. His activities included founding an organization in the name of Ārya Samāj (meaning, the assembly of the noble people) in Mumbai in 1875 at the persistent request of the local intellectuals who vehemently supported his call of "Back to the Vedas."

Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvāti was such a multi-faceted personality that it is very difficult to characterize what his biggest contribution was. He was a staunch nationalist with patriotic fervor, a social reformer with deep insights of the social fabric, a kind hearted person with a soft corner for the women and cows, a great humanitarian with deep rooted love for the downtrodden, a dedicated soul for the love of truth and hatred for the falsehood, and above all, the most brilliant Vedic scholar India produced since the times of the great etymologist

Yāska. His greatest contribution lies in bringing out the lost tradition of interpreting the Vedas based on the etymology of the words appearing in the Vedas. The etymology is greatly helpful in ascribing the correct meaning to the words with due regard to the root the word is derived from. This *ārṣa* tradition was lost in the last few thousand years and was singularly revived by Svāmī Dayānanda. For this singular and gigantic contribution he will be remembered forever as Maharṣi Dayānanda Sarasvatī. In the medieval period most of the scholars interpreted Vedas more as if it's in Sanskrit language though the truth is that the language is derived from Vedas. Sāyaṇa and all the later scholars, Indian and foreign, made this gross error and thus, limited the meaning of the Vedic hymns to the rituals and other superficial jargon. Maharṣi Dayānanda was a pioneer that he declared that the Vedas are the books of all true knowledge and he could show that the Vedas could guide every one of us in every occasion of life. His commentaries on the Vedas demonstrated the same in true earnest.

His lofty intentions and actions were overtly and covertly opposed by a number of selfish elements who wanted to exploit and subjugate the innocent God-fearing people in the name of superstitious rituals and dogmatic beliefs. This led to a number of attempts on his life, which he was able to survive because of his sterling *brahmacarya* and Yoga practices. However, the last such attempt, probably the 16^{th} one in the form of a deadly poison in the glass of milk that he drank in the night before retiring to bed, took its toll. About two months after the poison entered into his body, he breathed his last in the evening of Deepavali of 1883. When the artificial lights were about to illuminate the dark night of the new moon of Deepavali, he departed in a most remarkable manner showing the light of the Vedas to the entire world that would illuminate the earth forever. So great has been his contribution that the human history will have to be rewritten several times to document his

contributions that form the basis for most of the positive changes that have been witnessed in the world since his life.

Ārya Samāj (a society of the noble people) is his proud torch bearer. It has 6000 branches all over the world. As the name suggests, the members of Ārya Samāj have devoted themselves to all kinds of noble tasks. Be it the freedom movement, education for girls, education on the classical pattern through *gurukulas*, modern education with nationalist bias through DAV institutions, orphanages for the unfortunate children, hospitals and hostels for the needy and poor, help and support during the earthquakes, floods, cyclones and similar acts of nature, fight against injustice such as Hyderabad Satyāgraha, propagation of the Indian languages and culture, cry against cow slaughter and liquor consumption, or any such movement, Ārya Samāj was in the forefront. Ārya Samāj was not and is not a religion; it is not a Vedic church. It is a dynamic movement to preserve the past pristine glory of the Vedas by bringing the same to every human being without discriminating against gender, caste, color, creed, culture, language, religion, national origin, etc. Its fervent belief is that the universal teachings contained in the Vedas can unite the world and change it into a beautiful small global village. The message of Ārya Samāj is simple and universal and is contained in its ten principles appearing at the end of this booklet. The underlining objective is contained in the sixth principle, namely, "the prime object of the society is to do good to the world."

The message of the Vedas is reaching far and wide. A new wave of spirituality has dawned. Those who didn't bother to look inward beyond the material body are sitting for several minutes in meditative postures. They are attempting to know who they really are. This can lead to true worship of God because, as Vedas say, within me only He and I live together. Recent surveys indicate that there are about 10 million (one crore)

regular meditation practitioners in the USA alone. Vegetarianism is picking up throughout the world. Now there is greater respect and regards for other species. Like us, the animals and birds are body and soul together – they feel the joy and pain as we do. Growth of meditation and vegetarianism throughout the world is a silent movement without any government's involvement. Nor the world body of United Nations is playing any role. It is the pure peoples' movement – a silent revolution. While this has many underlining features, the first and foremost is the scientific temper that is prevailing in the common man's mind in the present modern scientific age. Nobody accepts anything that does not meet his reason. Furthermore to the reason, the particular idea must sound beneficial to him and his fellow beings. Thus, in nutshell, the ideas must appeal to his head and heart both. No existing religious book can come clean after the common man's dual scrutiny from his head and heart both. He had been exploring these books for many centuries. Now he is tired and fed up with the conflicts and wars that are seen everywhere in the world from an individual's heart to the huge battlefields. Indeed, now there is suspicion about religions in the common man's mind that they support irrational beliefs, immoral and even terrorist acts, and many other unacceptable things.

There is another class of people who disowned religions long ago and believed in matter and matter alone – they thought that they were body alone without the soul. One such example is that of communists. In less than a century, communism has been disowned by the very people who gave birth to it. They are fed up with the dry ideas void of soul. Within this group of people come also the scientists and academicians who had been studying the creation in its minutest detail. But they ignored the creator all these years because the prevailing religious books lacked the rigor and rationality that they are used to. They too are now tired of their arrogance that was reflected by

the fact that they ignored the artist of this great art for the last couple of centuries. Now they are beginning to see the need of a unified theory that can bring them closer to the beautiful mysteries of both – the art and the artist, the creation and the creator, the matter and the spirit.

Only the Vedas can satisfy all of them. Everybody from the layman to the top scientist can drink the nectar of *amṛta* that the Mother Veda has in plenty for every child on the earth. What is important is that one should disrobe himself of the false pretensions and come to Her lap as an innocent pure child. Only the knowledge contained in the Vedas can hold water; only the Vedas appeal to the head and heart of a reasonable, open-minded, rational and intelligent human being.

This brief introductory message is to every such person in the country and outside who wants to get more out of his/her life. It is to every one who stands for equality and respect for every human life and love and compassion for the other species. Every one who is longing to see the dawn of universal love, brotherhood and peace should accept this message and the longest tradition of his/her forefathers to carry forward the message of the Vedas to the next generation.

Maharṣi Dayānanda's words are equally meaningful today when he said that the Ārya Samāj was not a new sect. It stands for the *Sanātana Dharma*, the eternal knowledge that will remain in force so long as the sun shines on the earth. He further said that if you are genuinely interested in your own well being and in that of your community and nation then you must become a part of this movement. Otherwise, you would not meet success in your efforts. We invite you wholeheartedly to join us in this noble movement.

Back to the Vedas

If this message gets you interested in exploring the messages of the Vedas then take the first bold step. Ārya Samāj (meaning Noble Assembly) is not a sect or religion. It is not a Vedic *Mandir* or Church. It is a movement of noble souls for the benefit of the entire mankind. If you want to be a part of this movement to bring a total transformation in your own self and in your community then join hands with some like-minded people in your neighborhood to establish a unit of Ārya Samāj wherever you are. It requires nothing but the youthful zeal to be something different and to do something different. That fuel is hidden in every one of us and needs to be ignited to give rise to a fire that can give both light and warmth to the life. Contact the following:

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TEN PRINCIPLES OF ARYA SAMAJ

1. Of all true knowledge and whatever is known from knowledge, the Primary cause is Highest Lord i.e., GOD.
2. GOD is existent, intelligent, and blissful. He is formless, omniscient, kind, unborn, endless, unchangeable, beginningless, unequalled, the support of all, the master of all fearless, eternal, holy and creator of the Universe. He alone is worthy of worship.
3. The VEDAS are the books of all true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of all Aryas to read them, to teach them, to hear them, and to preach them.
4. One should always be ready to accept truth and give up untruth.
5. Everything should be done according to Dharma, that is after considering what is truth and what is untruth.
6. The chief object of the Arya Samaj is to good to the world,i.e., to make physical and social improvement.
7. We should treat all with love and justice according with dictates of Dharma.
8. We should dispel ignorance and diffuse knowledge.
9. One should not be content with one's own welfare alone, but should count the progress of all as one's own.
10. Everyone should consider oneself as bound in obeying social and all-benefiting rules, but everyone is free in matters pertaining to individual well-being.

It was February 1835, a time when the British were striving to take control of the whole of India. Lord Macaulay, a historian and a politician, made a historical speech in the British Parliament, commonly referred to as The Minutes, which struck a blow at the centuries old system of Indian education.

His words were to this effect: "I have traveled across the length and breadth of India and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief. Such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such caliber, that I do not think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage, and, therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native self-culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation."

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